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United States Department of State

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AUG 2 2 1994

Dear Senator Boxer:

I am writing in response to your recent letter in which you requested assistance in facilitating the delivery of relief supplies to Rwanda by Operation USA, a California-based disaster relief organization.

All decisions on shipping relief supplies to aid the Rwandan refugees are made in collaboration with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), which has responsibility for overall coordination of the relief effort to aid the Rwandan refugees. The U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and the Department of Defense work to support the UNHCR in getting urgently needed supplies to Rwanda and Zaire as quickly as possible. Due to limited airport and offloading capacity, shipments are prioritized and the most urgently needed items are shipped first.

According to the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, the supplies which Operation USA had originally requested to ship, although certainly very important, were not among those judged most critical by relief officials on the ground. Once the cholera epidemic broke out among the refugees in Zaire, Operation USA revised its donation to include urgently needed medical supplies. Airlift of Operation USA's donation has already begun and, in fact, may be completed by the time you receive this letter.

I hope that this information is helpful to you. If you have any further questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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The Honorable
Barbara Boxer,
United States Senate.

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